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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were to determine: (1) what attempts colleges and universities in Georgia had made to facilitate a successful college exit (i.e. a baccalaureate degree or completion of a prescribed segment of course work sufficient for job qualification or additional training needed in connection with a vocational choice) of educationally inferior students who, upon entrance, failed to meet the traditional entrance requirements; (2) whether provisions of this type differed between historically white and historically black institutions; and (3) whether there was any difference between state supported and private institutions in those provisions. A questionnaire constructed to obtain information on changes made and the procedures used to help educationally disadvantaged students successfully to exit from college was sent to 23 colleges and universities in Georgia, of whom 17 responded. Fourteen of these used GPA's, SAT scores, a predicted equation, or high school class rank in their standard admission criteria. Institutions indicating change or addition to their admissions procedure did admit students not meeting the standard requirements, generally on a probationary basis. The majority of institutions did not provide any further aid or support to these students. (AF)

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EDUCATIONALLY INFERIOR STUDENTS: GETTING IN AND OUT OF COLLEGE

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EPDA Institute

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
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Until the decade of the fifties higher education in America remained rationalistic in terms of its philosophical foundation and purposes. The rationalist position assumes that rationality is the most distinctive feature of man; and that the cultivation of reason is the only purpose of education. The surge of the realists ascribing to the concept of individual differences in terms of intellectual and social development produced a conflict within our educational system which we have yet to resolve.

With the outset of the Civil Rights movement in the late fifties one of the most complex and cumbersome tasks forced upon higher education in America was educating the almost total constituency of American society. Consequently, there has been a significant increased enrollment of students with educationally inferior backgrounds. This population is generally restricted to black, Mexican-American, Peurto Rican, Indian, and disadvantaged white students (Green, 1969).

Originally most planned efforts to aid minority students in college entrance were of a financial nature. This was indicative of a final recognition made by major universities to the effect that there were minority students who were adequately equipped to perform on a college level but were handicapped in the fulfillment of their desire to do so by financial deficiencies. Hence, the initiation of programs such as A Better Chance (ABC), begun in 1964 and having as its aim to place poor students with academic ability and motivation necessary to do competitive college preparatory work in boarding schools for their final two to four years of secondary education.

Shifting emphasis to the minority youth rejected because of

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various educational disabilities resulted in other kinds of procedures undertaken in effort to promote this collegiate invasion. These included the lowering of requirements for college entrance in terms of high school grade point averages and standardized test scores. Some subsequent courses of action have taken the form of enrichment programs offered to give rejected applicants a chance to demonstrate their abilities on college level or to academically upgrade students. Some of these programs provide course credits which are applied toward the baccalaureate once the students are officially classified "freshmen". An example of this is the General Studies Program, still in its experimental stage at the University of Utah (Grant and Angleman, 1969).

There is evidenced a growing concern for more immediate facilitation in this respect as reflected by the contents of a resolution passed by the assembly of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors on the admission of minority students. It was urged therein that each NACAC member have at least 10% of its undergraduate population composed of minority students half of whom should be designated as high risk; discard the use of test scores as prime determinants of admission for minority students; and provide supporting services to those minority students needing such services for successful college (academic) experiences.

Such expressed concerns and practices devoted to aiding minority youths in their quest for higher education as well as those who have not been motivated to the extent of desiring post-secondary schooling have strained the institutional admissions process greatly. Some of the diversified reactions have led to issues focusing on the appropriateness of predicting the success of minority students in college as well as the appropriateness of employing dual standards of admissions and evaluation.

It is almost a consensus among educators that students who fail to meet traditional entrance requirements such as high SAT or ACT scores and high school grade point average can and do survive in college with most successful outcomes; and that the increase of success is significantly greater with support programs (Green, 1969). This makes the finding that inability to adjust to the newness of the college milieu, rather than intellectual incapability, is the most attributable cause of students dropping out of college all the more factual, especially since this inability is associated with lack of personal attention and undefined vocational goals (Chase, 1968). This supports, too, the evidence suggesting that there is no way of knowing the predictive efficacy of either a generalized or institutional equation with respect to the academic success of educationally inferior students at a given college (Hoyt, 1968).

In view of the social pressures demanding education for the masses and the concentrated attempt made by our larger institutions of higher learning in effort to meet that demand there will be evidenced a continued increase of minority students - the educationally inferior - on the these campuses.

It is this phenomenon which gives rise to an interesting question: What provisions are made for educationally inferior students, once they have been admitted to college attaining regular or probationary freshman status, to facilitate a successful exit from college? (Successful exit in this presentation refers to termination of college experiences with a baccalaureate or completion of a prescribed segment of course work sufficient for job qualification or additional training needed in connection with a vocational choice.)

There is evidenced a paucity in the amount of published research pertinent to the stated area of concern. Perhaps, two of the most intensive studies exploring this area were

made by Edgerton (1968) and Plaut (1966). Both focused on programs designed for high risk students and indicated some success at the University of California-Los Angeles, New York University, and Hofstra University, also in New York.

Problem

It is on the basis of the "goodness" of American colleges and universities to facilitate college entrance for educationally inferior students and the apparent limited provisions made to facilitate a successful exit from college; and the scarcity of published research pertaining to the educationally inferior persister that the writer delved to answer the following questions: (1) What attempts are being made to facilitate a successful college exit of educationally inferior students who, upon entrance, failed to meet the traditional entrance requirements? (2) Do provisions of this type differ between institutions which are historically predominantly black and those which are historically predominantly white? (3) Is there an element of distinction to be made between state supported institutions and those which are privately owned so far as provisions made to accomplish successful college exit for educationally disabled students is concerned?

Sample

This study focused on provisions made to aid in academic success for high risk students enrolled in colleges and universities located in the state of Georgia. The population of institutions dealt with included only those listed in Proceedings, a copy of the official records from the seventy-third annual meeting of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1968; and was restricted to institutions which were initially accreditated prior to 1955 and whose accreditation level is ei-

ther II (bachelor's degree only), III (bachelor's and master's degrees), or IV (bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees). All of these institutions have been assigned a type classification of "g" (general).

Method

The instrument used in this study was a self-constructed questionnaire consisting of nine items. The items were of such nature so as to ascertain information revealing the kinds of changes which had been made by institutions or supplementary procedures employed to help students failing to meet traditional entrance requirements and to facilitate a successful exit from college in the event they persisted (Appendix A).

The questionnaire, attached to a cover letter, was sent to 23 colleges and universities in the state of Georgia. Initially there was a return of 52%. As a result of a follow-up letter one month later there was an additional return of 21%. Two of the returned questionnaires were eliminated from the data analysis because of the total response being in the form of a letter or a single statement from which no factual information could be drawn. The latter type of response indicated a complete disregard of the concept "educationally inferior student". These institutions were considered, however, in the list of participating institutions.

Insert Table 1 about here

The data was analyzed in the following manner: percentages for responses made to various items were initially calculated on the total population and then on the basis of (historical) ethnical predomination and source of financial support. The

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four levels of comparison between institutions on selected responses were: historically predominantly black (HPB) v. historically predominantly white (HPW); state supported v. privately owned; HPB stte supported, v. HPB and privately owned; and HPW state supported and v. HPW privately owned.

Findings

With respect to the traditional entrance requirements fourteen of the responding institutions, representing 87% of the population, use GPA's, SAT scores, a predicted equation, or high school class rank in their standard admission criteria.

- -

Insert Tables 2 and 3 about here

- -

The only outstanding factor - if that is not too severe a term - that can be observed from the preceding data is that white schools tend to rely on GPA's (with white private schools relying on SAT scores, a total of 800 or better) more so than the other categories listed.

All institutions which indicated some change or addition to their admission procedure have included in their student body students failing to meet their standard entrance requirements. A question raised in reference to the status assigned these students once they were enrolled suggested that most institutions granted probationary status, a prerogative exercised somewhat equally among privately owned and state supported schools. The same [redacted] tendency was observed among state and privately supported schools which are historically predominantly black when compared with those which are historically predominantly white.

Another finding in this study indicates that the majority of institutions permittin the entrance of academically low students

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(as determined by their traditional requirements for admission) have not begun to provide any supplementary aid in effort to make their pursuit successful. Out of the total population 68% of the institutions have made liberal concessions in the admissions phase, 81% of which indicated no progress beyond that point.

Insert Tables 4 and 5 about here

A final finding in this respect pertains to future plans which might benefit educationally inferior students during their course of academic pursuit. A total of fourteen institutions reported no such plans. (This figure includes 9 of the 11 colleges indicating changes in their admissions policies.)

Discussion

In regards to the questions which served as the basis for this investigation the findings indicate that while there is progress being made to permit the entrance of high risk students very little is being done during their stay to aid in a successful termination of their college careers. Most of what has been done in this vein as well as what has not been done does not differ, generally speaking, between the kinds of institutions matched on their response to various items. The few instances where there was evidenced a majority as such is not too strongly emphasized at this point because of the small population of HPB institutions available for the data analysis.

Summary

There is a definite transition in the social and economic structure of American society as reflected in our educational institutions. Especially can this be observed in our institu-

tions of higher education. Specifically this transition is reflected in the emergence of minority youths on campuses of major universities throughout the nation. Inasmuch as this population includes a majority of high risk students this transition, in effect, has created a number of conflicts within our educational system. Perhaps herein embedded is an irony of the "democratic process" to which we are (supposedly) committed.

It has been evidenced by this study that we have much to do by way of resolving these conflicts. Georgia is far from being alone in this endeavor. Unfortunately, some states have not even gained this perception yet.

Education is no longer a privilege. It is a right. It is, therefore, imperative that educators of today concert their efforts to fight for the academic survival of all students on all levels of education. That is an obligation.

Recognition of individual difference is a "common sense" ability. If this is the basis for permitting students who are considered high risk in academic potential to pursue post-secondary education then let it also be the basis for taking the initiative to help them finalize that pursuit in a manner which will be constructive in results and, therefore, beneficial to society-at-large.

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TABLE 1

Institutional Descriptions

Name	Source of Support	HPB	HPW	AL
1. Albany State College	State	*		II
2. Brenau College	Private		*	II
3. Clark College	Private	*		II
4. Fort Valley State College	State	*		III
5. Georgia State University	State		*	IV
6. Georgia Southern College	State		*	II
7. LaGrange College	Private		*	II
8. Mercer College	Private		*	II
9. Morehouse College	Private	*		II
10. North Georgia College	State		*	II
11. Oglethorpe College	Private		*	II
12. Shorter College	Private		*	II
13. Spelman College	Private	*		II
14. Tift College	Private		*	II
15. Valdosta State College	State		*	II
16. University of Georgia	State		*	IV
17. Wesleyan College	Private		*	II

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TABLE 2

Entrance Requirements

Inst. No.	GPA	SAT	PE	Class Rank	HPB	HPW	Support
1.	2.00	325/344		up 50	*		State
2.	2.00	800		up 50		*	Private
3.			*	up 70	*		Private
4.	2.00		*	up 50	*		State
5.	2.00	850		up 50		*	State
6.			*	up 50		*	State
7.	2.00	800				*	Private
8.				up 50		*	Private
9.	2.50	800		up 25	*		Private
10.			*			*	State
11.		800		up 50		*	Private
12.				up 50		*	Private
13.		650		up 25	*		Private
14.	2.00	800		up 50		*	Private
15.			*	up 40		*	State
16.			*			*	State

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TABLE 3

Entrance Requirements According
To Ethnic Groups and Sources of Support

	GPA-2.00+	SAT-800+	PE	Class Rank (up 50%)
HPB:				
State	2	0	1	2
Private	0	1	1	0
Total	2	1	2	2
HPW:				
State	1	0	4	2
Private	3	4	0	4
Total	4	4	4	6
Grand Total: N = 6	5	6	8	
% 37	31	37	50	

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TABLE 4

Employment of Supportive Measures

Inst. No.	Changes in Admissions (yes	No)	In-School Provisions (yes	No)	Future Plans (yes	No)
1.	*		*		NR	
2.		*		*		*
3.	*		*			*
4.	*			*		*
5.		*		*		*
6.	*		*			*
7.	*			*	*	
8.	*		*			*
9.		*		*		*
10.	*			*		*
11.		*		*		*
12.	*			*		*
13.		*		*		*
14.	*			*		*
15.	*			*		*
16.	*			*		*
Total	11	5	4	12	1	14
%	68	31	25	75	6	87

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TABLE 5

Employment of Supportive Measures According
To Ethnic Groups And Sources of Support

Categories of Institutions		Admission Changes (yes	no)	In-School Provisions (yes	no)	Future Plans (yes	no)
HPB:							
State		2	0	1	1	0	1
Private		1	2	1	2	0	3
N = 5	total	3	2	2	3	0	4
	%	60	40	40	60	0	80
HPW:							
State		4	1	1	4	0	5
Private		4	2	1	5	1	5
N = 11	total	8	3	2	9	1	10
	%	72	27	18	81	9	90
Total State		6	1	2	5	0	6
	%	37	6	12	31	0	37
N = 16							
Total Private		5	4	2	7	1	8
	%	31	25	12	43	6	50
N = 16							
Grand Total		11	5	4	12	1	14
%		68	31	25	75	6	87

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Appendix A

127 Mark Twain Residence Hall
515 South Fifth Street
Columbia, Missouri 65201
February 7, 1970

Dear Sir:

Presently, I am a participant in the 1969-70 EPDA Institute in Student Personnel Work at the University of Missouri. I have undertaken a research problem pertaining to educationally inferior students who successfully terminate their college careers. Investigation of this problem necessitates soliciting information from you as an admission officer of an institution of higher learning. The attached questionnaire has been structured for this purpose.

Hopefully, all questionnaires will be returned by February 15, 1970.

If you wish a copy of the completed research, please indicate such interest on the questionnaire.

My deepest and most sincere appreciation is extended to you for whatever assistance is rendered in reference to this matter.

Respectfully yours,

Carol Dolores Cash

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Research in Student Personnel Work
(Questionnaire)

1. Name of institution: _____

2. Location: _____
(City)

3. Check below those items which are included in your set of criteria by which college entrance is determined:

__1. High school grade point average
(a) Minimum grade point average required for admission _____

__2. College entrance examination scores
(a) Name of test(s) used for admission purpose _____
(b) Minimum score required on each for admission _____

__3. Principal's or other high school official's recommendation

__4. Letters of recommendation from personal references

4. Traditionally students are admitted from which percentile range of their high school graduating class? _____

5. Are students admitted who rank in the lowest quartile of their high school graduating class? ___yes; ___no

(a) Are they assigned freshman status upon entrance? ___yes; ___no
(b) Is this status regular __ or probationary __?

6. Have there been any provisions made within the last eight years to facilitate college entrance for students failing to meet standard admission requirements? ___yes; ___no (If the response to this question is "yes", proceed to respond to items a. through e.)

(a) Indicate ways in which these provisions have been made:

__1. Lowering the minimum high school grade point average originally required for admission

__2. Lowering the "cut-off" point of college entrance scores

__3. Summer school enrichment programs

__4. Other (Please specify, using attachments if necessary. Copy of program(s) are welcomed.)

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b. Are any of these provisions federally-funded? ___yes; ___no

c. Does your present grading system pattern the conventional A, B, C, D, F, I, W, S system? ___yes; ___no

d. What practices have been effected to aid educationally inferior students insuccessfully terminating their college education? (Please explain or list programs if feasible.)

1. Are any of the aforementioned federally-funded? ___yes; ___no

2. Do any of the foregoing terminate with the granting of a certificate sufficient for future career preparation such as paraprofessionals? ___yes; ___no

e. What percentage of these academically poor students successfully completed their college career in 1969? _____ 1968? _____ 1967? _____

7. Do you anticipate any future changes in your admission policy which would facilitate college entrance for educationally inferior students? ___yes; ___no

8. Do you anticipate the initiation of programs such as these indicated in question 6 or part "d" of question 6? ___yes; ___no (If the response is "yes", please indicate a tentative time as to when this change will transpire. _____)

9. What is the major source of this institution's financial support?

NOTE: Upon completion of this questionnaire, please forward by February 15th to

Miss Carol Dolores Cash
127 Mark Twain Residence Hall
515 South Fifth Street
Columbia, Missouri 65201